

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

My Gift

When Santa Claus is hitching up
The reindeers to his sleigh,
I'm going to bring a great big bag
Of love to him and say—
Dear Santa Claus, please take this bag
And on each Christmas tree
Tie just a little bunch of love
Fast with a memory.
So you dear friend I wish the best
Of all good gifts that are,
Good health, and wealth, and fame, and love,
The last more precious far.
So search ye closely every branch
When candles bright the tree,
And you will find my bit of love
Tied with a memory.

W. SNEED, Michigan Farmer

Under the Holly Bough

WHO have scorned each other,
Or injured friend or brother,
In this fast-fading year;
Ye who by word or deed,
Have made a kind heart bleed—
Come gather here.
Let slanders and sinning
Forget their strife's beginning,
And join in friendship now;
Be links no longer broken,
Be sweet forgiveness spoken,
Under the holly bough.

Ye who have loved each other,
Sister and friend and brother,
In this fast-fading year;
Mother and sire and child,
Young man and maiden mild,
Come, gather here.
And let your hearts grow fonder,
As memory shall ponder
Each past unbroken vow;
Old loves and younger wooing
Are sweet in the renewing,
Under the holly bough.

Ye who have nourished sadness,
Estranged from hope and gladness,
In this fast-fading year;
Ye with o'er-burdened mind
Made aliens from your kind—
Come, gather here.
Let not the useless sorrow
Pursue your night and morrow,
If e'er you hoped, hope now,
Take heart, uncloud your faces,
And join in our embraces,
Under the holly bough.

—Charles Mackay.

Birds and Animals Share Christmas

CHRISTMAS is not merely a festival celebrated by and for man alone. Among the folk lore of other countries are several quaint stories in which animals and birds give evidence of their adoration. A well-known Bosnian legend offers a version of world adoration—the claim that on the holy day "the sun in the east bowed down, the stars stood still; the mountains and forests shook and touched the earth with their summits, and the green pine tree bent; the grass was beflowered with the opening of blossoms; incense sweet as myrrh pervaded upland and forest; birds sang on the mountain tops and all gave thanks to the great God."

In Bosnia on Christmas day a sheaf of rye is put into birds' nests and bird houses for the birds' Christmas. A stranger, stranded in a Michigan town was once startled to see a sheaf of rye in a bird box. He knew immediately that one of his kind lived there and was keeping Christmas in the old way.

An old Indian legend tells us that on Christmas night all the deer in the forest kneel in adoration before the Great Spirit. Woe to him, however, who tries to spy upon them. He is punished with perpetual stiffening of the knees.

Many people of the old world claim that on Christmas night animals are gifted with speech, but none must trespass or eavesdrop.

The Greater Need.
Little Horace—My mamma says maybe you'll give my papa a safety razor for Christmas.
Department Store Santa Claus—Yes, little man, I think I will.
Little Horace—Hain't you better keep it and use it yourself?—Puck.

Have You Seen Old Santa?



Just Couldn't Stay Awake



PHOTO BY F. FOURNIER

The Joy of the True Spirit of Christmas

ARE you willing to forget what you have done for other people and remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give life; to close your book of complaints against the universe, and look around for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and the desires of little children; to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking whether your friends love you, and ask yourself whether you love them enough to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the eternal love? Then you can keep Christmas. And if you can keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone.—Dr. Henry Van Dyke.

Soft Sugar Vanilla Wafers.

Cream together two cupsful of soft sugar and one cupful of butter. Add the yolks of five eggs well beaten and a generous flavoring of vanilla. Sift two teaspoonsful of baking powder and one-half a teaspoonful of soda with two cupsful of flour. Add alternately the well-beaten whites of the five eggs and the prepared flour with enough more to make a soft dough. Roll thin and cut in small rounds, diamonds or squares.

Distributed Carols.

"Why are June weddings so popular?"
"Because of the natural tendency of conditions to adjust themselves. People shouldn't be expected to buy wedding presents and Christmas presents all at the same time."

DECEMBER ACROSTIC

IF THE following words are arranged in order, one under the other, their initials will spell the name of something relating to Christmas. As a further help, we will say that each word has three letters:

1. A small insect.
2. Word used in speaking of ocean tide.
3. More than one.
4. Word used in asking questions.
5. Adjective meaning not rigid.
6. A small part of the body.
7. Head covering.
8. Verb to be mistaken.
9. Month of the year.—Successful Farming.

Christmas Is Children's Day

THE message of Christmas is love. Its emblem is radiant, thankful, contented childhood. Without love and without children there could be no real Christmas. The form might survive but the substance would be lacking.

Unhappy must be the adult who cannot make himself a child again in spirit at the Yuletide. For Christmas is the universal children's day. Men and women are superfluous except as they make themselves partners with those whom the day glorifies.

Let us, then, lay aside the affectation and arrogance of manhood and womanhood and be children again. Let us adopt their point of view and put ourselves in their places—in the places of these sons and daughters of ours and of the sons and daughters of our neighbors. It was only a year or so ago, as it seems, when we hung our well-worn stockings in a row along the mantel shelf, while our fathers and mothers looked on with unfeigned pleasure at the innocent confidence we showed in the morrow.

Even as you and I. It all comes back in a flood of memories. Life was simpler then. Our desires were less pretentious than those our children voice now. Modest remembrances they were that helmed toe and heel of the stockings mother knit.

Life and its circumstances change, but the essence of Christmas never. The same happy childhood, the same restlessness, the same snail-like creeping of time as the holiday approaches. The same parenthood, too—the same planning across the reading table after the boys and girls are abed, the same loving consideration of what this or that child most desires and how far the family purse can be stretched to permit some further purchase.

Every home is assured a Christmas if it has a great, warm heart pulsing in tune with the hopes and joys of childhood.

St. Nicholas, the Holy Man of the Fourth Century

IN THE entire category of the saints none continues to enjoy a more extended popularity than St. Nicholas, archbishop of Myra. At this time, when preparations are being made for the celebration of the birthday of the Christ-child, it is particularly fitting that we recall something of the character of this holy man of the Fourth century and remember some of the legends which bring him so close to us at Christmas time.

Strange to say, while St. Nicholas is regarded as the special guardian of children, virgins and sailors, he came to be regarded as the patron saint of robbers, from an alleged adventure with thieves, whom he compelled to restore some stolen goods to their proper owners.

In various parts of the old world it is customary for the elder members of the family to place little presents in the shoes as well as the stockings of the younger relatives on the eve of St. Nicholas' day. In convents the young women used to place silk stockings at the door of the apartment of the abbess, with a paper recommending them to "Great St. Nicholas of her chamber."

While the emblem of the three golden balls is derived from the Lombard merchants, yet St. Nicholas is frequently pictorially represented as bearing three golden balls or purses, the origin of which can be traced to an act of the saint which has come down to us in the form of an ecclesiastical notation.

After the Long, Long Trip



The Most Generally Observed of All Festivals

CHRISTMAS is of all the festivals the most generally observed in the western world. It is the universal holiday of Christendom, and the general phases of its observance are in their essentials similar in all countries. It is a sort of common ground on which we all meet for, at least, one day in the year.

In its religious aspect the festival is a remembrance of the Christian faith—the gift of God to the world of a divine Savior. Out of that central and dominant idea, no doubt, grew up the practice of selecting Christmas, above all other seasons, as the time for friends to bestow gifts upon one another, and for all who can, to extend charity to those in need.

Although not so old as the religious feature, the domestic and social features of the festival date back to very early times, at any rate, to times that are early in our history.

For centuries Christmas has been pre-eminently a season of home-gathering, when absent ones return and the family circle is once more completed, or as nearly completed as the changes and chances of life make possible. With home-coming was associated good cheer, and so Christmas came to be a season of feasting and merrymaking.

In England during the Middle ages, and for many generations after the Middle ages had closed, the Christmas season, which included at least a whole week, and liturgically 40 days, was given over to merrymaking of various kinds, some of which have gone the way of many of the customs of our forefathers. For instance, there was the bringing of the Yule-log to be lighted on the fireplace on Christmas eve with much ceremony and rejoicing. We have no Yule-log for there are but few fireplaces now. The name of the log recalls another name for Christmas, which was anciently called and is still known as Yule-tide or Yule-time.

Christmas.

The origin of Christmas or Christ-mas, so called with reference to the last words of the chief religious service of the day according to ancient ritual, "Ite missa (or massa) est," is to be found in the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. Its observance is not a development, having existed from the earliest days of Christianity. In fact, in many respects there has been evolution instead of evolution in the manner of its celebration.

Using Old Stockings.

It is interesting to know and economical to follow the many little odds and ends that can be made out of old stockings, silk or Hiss. So often they are thrown away because of endless holes and runs—not good, you think, for anything—but if this kind is saved until a fairly good pile has been accumulated one can start a very fine silk rag rug. The more numerous the colors the prettier the rug.

CAROLS AS PART OF THE CHRISTMAS SERVICE.

THE origin of the Christmas carol is uncertain. It is probably as old as Christianity. Indeed, Bishop Taylor in his "Great Exemplar" remarks that the first carol is the hymn of the angels to the shepherds in the plains of Bethlehem:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." In the Fifteenth century carols were widely used throughout Europe. In fact, the first pieces printed by the very first printers were carols. In one of the oldest collections appears "The Boar's Head," which used to be sung as that old dish was carried to the table during the Christmas revelry:

The Boar's Head in hands I bring
With garlands gay and birds singing;
I pray you all to help me sing
"Quit eatie in convivio!"

"The Boar's Head" represents one of the convivial carols or "jollie chansons," which had their place at the feasts, dances and other gay festivities of the Christmas season.

In Shakespeare's time bands of itinerant singers used to wander about the streets and make their carols a pretext for getting money.

During the Eighteenth century carols declined greatly, and many of the quaint old customs which had marked Christmas festivals for centuries became obsolete.

Carols still exist in parts of England.

In Wales it has been preserved to a still greater extent, while Ireland, too, has her Christmas carolling in time-honored style. France has its "Noels," and in Italy Christmas carols have been sung since the time of St. Francis of Assisi, who discovered the power of sacred song in the vernacular.

In churches all over the world many of the delightful old carols are now a part of the Christmas service.

Good Reason, Too.

At Christmas the children of a certain provincial school tried to collect money by going from house to house singing carols and snatches of hymns. Many complaints reached the rector's ears of bands of youngsters scampering through the first verse of "While Shepherds Watched," and then violently ringing the doorbell. So he instituted inquiries on the next occasion he visited the school.

"Why is it," he asked, "that instead of singing the hymn in a reverent way, you scamper through one verse and then ring the bell?"

Silence reigned for a short time. Then a shrill voice from a small boy at the back of the room was heard in explanation:

"Please, sir, it's 'cause they always lets the dog loose at the second verse."

Charity in the Heart.

"Be the reason for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial fire of charity in the heart."—Washington Irving.